

# Kelso-Martin's Bluff Rail Project

WSDOT proposes adding a third rail main line to the existing two-track main line from Kelso to Martin's Bluff, which is located near Woodland. The project would also add about 130,000 feet of siding and yard tracks and improve safety at road-rail grade crossings for people driving, bicycling and walking. Our goal is to complete an environmental impact statement (EIS) by the end of 2002. Construction could begin as early as 2005, if additional funding is made available.

## Kelso Station



## Why is WSDOT pursuing Kelso-Martin's Bluff rail improvements?

This project will improve safety, reduce rail congestion and, as a result, support more frequent and reliable Amtrak service.

Freight and passenger train traffic has increased in the Kelso-Longview area. This includes increases in both through-traffic and local traffic. Local train traffic is primarily bound to or from the growing ports of Kalama and Longview. Four rail yards serve these two ports. Outside one of these rail yards, local freight trains block more than 70 through-trains per day as they stop and block one of two main line tracks.

This project will keep the main line clear for passenger and through-trains and allow local freight trains to operate off of the rail main line. It will also improve reliability, reduce travel times and allow more frequent Amtrak service.

## Project Map



## Project Facts

- The Kelso Martin's Bluff Rail Project EIS was launched in the winter of 2001
- The project calls for adding a third main line track to the existing two-track main line between the Stranger Tunnel north of Kelso to a point three miles north of Woodland.
- The project also adds about 130,000 feet of additional sidings and yard tracks in the vicinity.
- Dedicated pedestrian crossings will be provided.
- Changes to several grade crossings in the project area being considered.
- The total project construction cost is estimated to be \$170 million.

## The end result

Construction of the third rail main line from Kelso to Martin's Bluff, the addition of approximately 130,000 feet of siding and yard tracks, and safety improvements at four at-grade crossings for people driving, bicycling or walking across the tracks. An EIS must be completed and funds must be acquired before construction can begin.

## What is the project timeline?

The EIS process was started in 2001. The draft EIS will be presented for public comment in late 2002. A record of decision is expected in late 2003. If funding is available, construction could begin as early as 2005.

## What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

An Environmental Impact Statement studies the impacts and benefits of a proposed project on people and the environment and considers reasonable alternatives to the proposal. The EIS process provides opportunities for all interested parties to learn about the project and provide input.

## Why is WSDOT conducting an EIS?

WSDOT is committed to improving Amtrak Cascades service between Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. In order to provide additional passenger service in the future, rail congestion in the Kelso-Martin's Bluff area must be alleviated. The EIS will guide the design and construction of rail improvements.

## Expenditure Plan

	Prior Expenditures	Remaining Costs	Total
State Funds	\$850,000	\$8,018,000	\$8,868,000
Funded subtotal	\$850,000	\$8,018,000	\$8,868,000
Unfunded amount		\$161,089,000	\$161,089,000
Total Cost	\$850,000	\$169,957,000	\$169,957,000

Financial data is current as of 9/1/01.

## How can I get involved?

Your thoughts and opinions are important to us. The public is invited to submit questions and comments about this project. The specific schedule for submitting comments to be included in the EIS will be posted here or are available by calling the WSDOT Rail Office at 1-800-822-2015.

## What is going to be done to protect the environment?

The EIS process is designed to consider a number of environmental topics, including wetlands, air quality, noise, fish habitat, and neighborhood qualities. The specific measures required to protect the environment will be determined when the final EIS is completed.

## How is safety being addressed?

One of the key components of this project is to improve safety at four at-grade crossings. In addition, a number of pedestrian crossings will be improved. Nearly all of the options considered in the EIS process would improve crossing safety.

## Financial Information

The Kelso-Martin's Bluff rail project is currently in its early phases. Additional funds will be required over the next 2 biennia to complete construction.

## **Government-to-government tribal consultation process**

WSDOT is working with the Cowlitz Tribe in a number of ways, including personal contacts, community meetings, mailings, and site visits.

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## **How can I get more information?**

For detailed information about this project, contact the Project Manager: